

MILE HIGH ATARI MAGAZINE



JULY ISSUE

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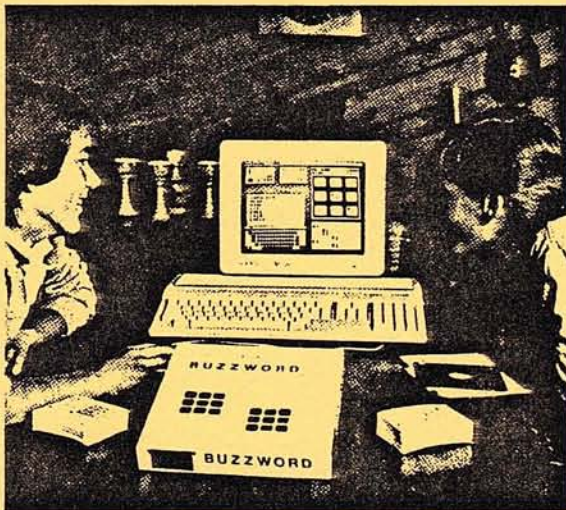
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An exciting new **BUZZWORD** —THAT'S FUN!

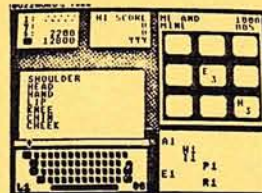


Panak strikes! By Steve Panak

Buzzword
by Paul Granchelli
THE BUZZWORD GAME CO., INC.
P.O. Box 440747
Aurora, CO 80044
48K Disk \$39.95

Because of my occasional ruthless nature, games aren't always voluntarily made available for my reviews. Fortunately for consumers, I can root most of these out, and sometimes the search itself has the beneficial side effect of increasing the intensity of my scrutiny.

This month, I received a game with a letter expressing trepidation at the prospect of allowing me to sink my fangs into it. It's a trivia game, **Buzzword**. If the manufacturers knew how much I hate trivia games, they'd never have sent it. That would have been a crime, since I would never have obtained it myself—despite my prejudice, I must give it a thumbs-up.



Buzzword/ATARI ST Screen

The game is less a trivia game than a computerization of the old TV game show *Family Feud*. Given a category, one or two players try to guess words formed from letters displayed in a distribution pool. Additional clues are possible, such as the first letter of a word and/or the number of letters in the word. The three difficulty levels force you to guess at everything from common words to obscure slang, and one or two persons or teams may play at a time.

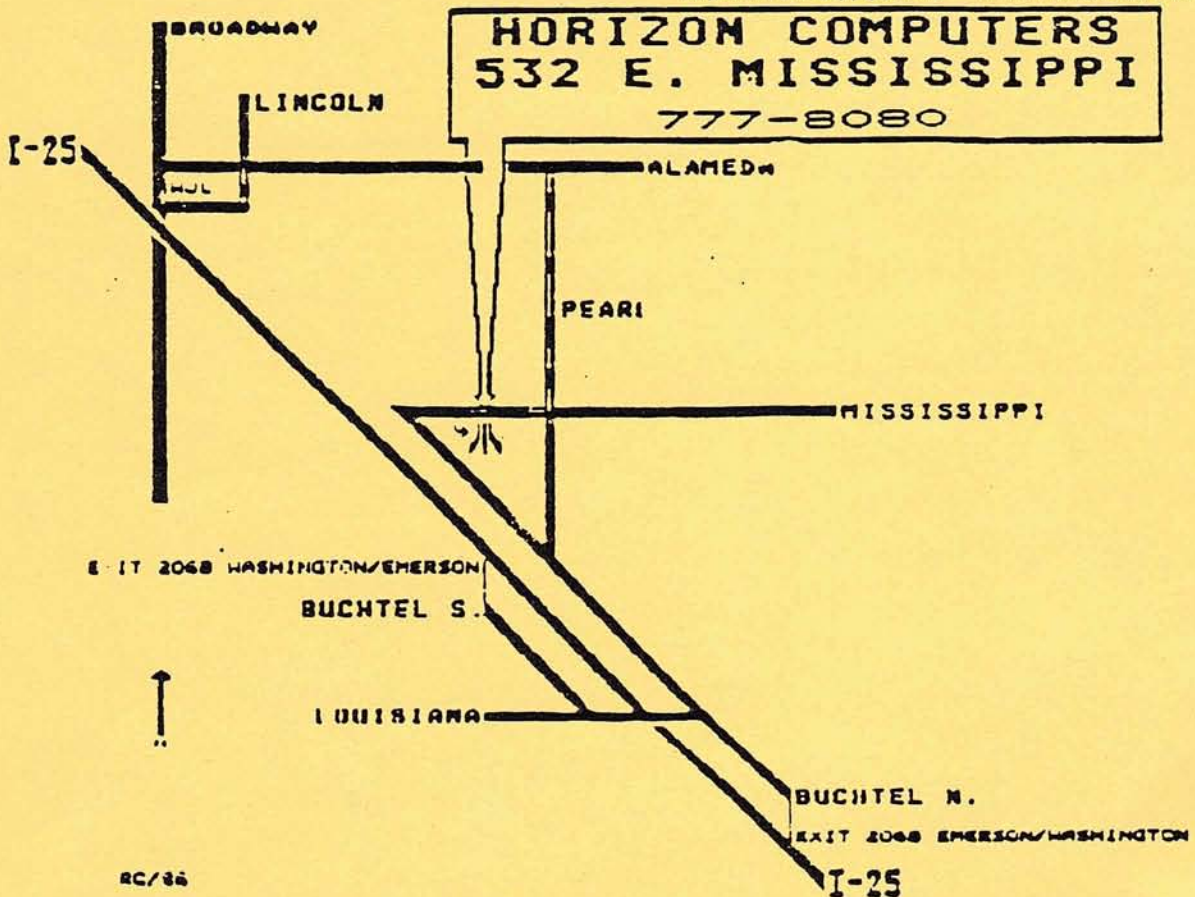
Supplementing the game are cards similar to those of trivia games. Those give a more complete description of the category, such as "No Nutrition" (things, other than food, that people put in their mouths). We especially enjoyed the category "Buzzword Connection," featuring words with a given prefix. This was often difficult, since the prefix *sea* might contain the words *seahorse* and *search*.

The object of the game is to guess words, earn points and win with the highest score. A pot builds, and there's a bonus round—familiar scoring fixtures from game shows. Do you try to guess just one more word—and risk missing, giving the pot to your opponent—or should you pass and collect a slightly smaller pot? Like most great games, there are more than enough opportunities for strategy.

The screen is set up nicely, with clues and letter distribution displayed on the right, and scoring data on the upper left of the screen. The bottom left contains an animated typewriter, on which guessed words are printed. While the display may not have the highest quality graphics I've ever seen, it is legible—and, in a word game, that's very important. All control is through the keyboard: your team's best typist should input the answers. After typing in the card number, clues (if any) are displayed, and you begin guessing words.

As for difficulty—the game is tough. There are enough words in each category to keep it interesting for quite a few plays. The introductory package contains 200 cards. If the game is a success, I'm sure more will be issued. And the game will be a success—if enough people talk about it. **Buzzword** is a fun game, and a good vocabulary-building tool.

Reprinted with permission from Analog Computing Magazine, 565 Main St., Cherry Valley, MA 01011; November, 1986 Issue. Analog Computing Magazine is published monthly. Subscription rate is \$28.00 per year.



WE STILL OFFER CLUB DISCOUNTS

5% DISCOUNT FOR CASH

3% DISCOUNT FOR CHECKS

2% DISCOUNT FOR CREDIT CARDS

ATARI CLUB OF DENVER

CLUB OFFICERS

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LIBRARIAN	PAUL MIRCI	699-7816
EXEC DIRECTOR	PAT CLIFFORD	364-2171
SECRETARY	TOMMY THOMAS II	367-8498
TREASURER	GUY MCDANIELS	238-2366
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	TOM IOWA	795-9712

CLUB MEETING

The Atari Club of Denver meeting is held on the first Tuesday of the month at the Aurora Public Library, located at 14949 E. Alameda at 7:00 p.m.

ATARI COMPUTER CLUB OF DENVER is an independent computer club and user group not connected with the Atari Corporation or any other commercial organization. This is a non-profit organization strictly for the support of Atari computer users by Atari computer users. Use of the name ATARI or any other trademark is only for reference to that product.

The MILE HIGH ATARI MAGAZINE is the official newsletter of STARFLEET ATARI USER GROUP and is published monthly in cooperation with the ATARI CLUB OF DENVER. Original material in the MILE HIGH ATARI MAGAZINE may be reprinted, provided that MILE HIGH ATARI MAGAZINE and the author, if known, are given. Material from other clubs may not be reprinted without their permission.

S T I G

The ST INTEREST GROUP meets at the Hampden Library at 9755 E. Girard Ave at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. Contact Ed Fason for more information at 371-6614.

WHAT KIND OF MEMBER ARE YOU? A POEM FROM LA-ACE

Are you an active member,
the kind that would be missed?
Or are you just contented
to have your name on the list?
Do you attend the meetings
and mingle with the flock?
Or do you just stay at home,
then criticize and knock?
Do you take an active part
to help the work along?
Or are you satisfied
that you just belong?
Think this over, member,
you know right from wrong.
Are you an active member,
or do you just belong?

STARFLEET ATARI USER GROUP

CLUB OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	SCOTT ANDERSEN	451-5892
1ST VICE-PRES.	GUY McDANIEL	238-2366
2ND VICE-PRES.	DONALD MAUS	988-0419
SECRETARY	GARY SKINNER	466-0512
TREASURER	ORRIN BOWLING	428-9735
LIBRARIAN	NANCY ANDERSEN	451-5892
NEWSLETTER EDITOR	DAVE LLOYD	457-0320

The Officers/Directors meeting is held on the Monday preceding each regular meeting at Denny's Restaurant, 3600 Fox St. (north end of 23rd St. viaduct) at 7:00 pm.

CLUB MEETING

STARFLEET meets on the 2nd Friday of the month at Pomona High School, 8101 Pomona Drive, just west of 82nd and Hadsworth at 7:00 p.m.

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THE ATARI CLUB OF DENVER APRIL 1987 MEETING MINUTES

by Tommy E Thomas II
EPISODE VI

IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY..... As we left our band of brave HERO's in the last episode, they were escaping from THE DARK and evil EMPEROR OF THE OVERMIND. Caught in a CROSSFIRE between a STAR DESTROYER, STAR GUNNERS, and a DREADNAUGHT or two in the HODGE PODGE, the brave crew of the SHADOW HAWK, led a HAPPY ASTRO CHASE through a field of ASTEROIDS. A LASER STRIKE caused these STAR RAIDERS to make a forced PLANETFALL and IMPACT on DOOMWORLD. "ZORK, FOOLBLITZKI and BOULDERDASH," cursed CAPTAIN BEEBLE, as he gave the CREATIVE PROCESS LEADER BOARD a SWAT. "He'll never reach the MASUDAS STARCROSS and the MECHANIC BRIGADE at this rate." "Alas, I SUSPECT and ENVISION that this is the FINAL FLIGHT for this COSMIC DEFENDER," sighed JAVA JIM, the EGGARD from the FORTRESS planet of XAGON, as he looked at the BLUE PRINT.

"DOGGIES, guess we'll have to LEGGIT down the IONROAD like a BLACK RABBIT from here on out," THE SPACE COMBOY stated as he put on his HOME PACK and motioned for the AXIS ASSASIN to do the same. It was like many of the other HAYOUT, SLEAZY ADVENTURES these CYTRON MASTERS had been on before. So begins another STRANGE ODDSSEY to add to their GALACTIC ADVENTURES. The HELLFIRE WARRIOR and THE GEMSTONE WARRIOR were wounded by an ATTACK OF MUTATED CAMELS but at last (after reading THE HITCHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY) the ADVENTURE MASTERS reached the edge of THE FORBIDDEN FOREST and made an EASYFIND of the GATES OF APSHAI. Entering one of THE SEVEN CITIES OF GOLD, THE ADVENTURE CREATORS passed a PRINT SHOP, a NEWSTATION, a GRAPHIC MAGICIAN, and a MUSIC STUDIO, before finding the Aurora Public Library. Entering the group gave the DRAGON EYE signal of Fuji and were welcomed to the meeting.

Chester Cox, THE MASTER OF TIME and CARNIVAL MASTER, started the meeting with a BARRAGE of jokes and CROSSWORD MAGIC concerning the May computer fair that some of the club members had represented Denver Atari users groups at. It was also announced that the next STARFLEET meeting as well as the next Atari Club of Denver meeting would have a demonstration of the 8-bit MIDI system. Geraldine Strong, our DATA PERFECT ASSEMBLER, was then recognized for her efforts in THE QUEST of bringing to our Club over seventy new disks from other users groups in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas. (other TRAVELLERS are encouraged to do the same!) Phil Michealson of the LAPIS PHILOPHORIUM of Horizon Computers then showed some of the new programs and other TECH DREAM items that were available. BUZZWORD was then bootied up and everyone was then sent on a WORD RACE as the members were divided into two groups and a long (and one sided) competition began. One of the three BUZZWORD designers from Aurora, Paul Granchelli, put everyone's brain to a few ULTIMA tests as he explained (and the referee) this great word game. The meeting ended in good cheer and questions and information flowed out into the UNIVERSE concerning Atari from a band of people unafraid of when THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK.

Our brave SILICON WARRIORS realized that they had made a TIMESLIP into an ALTERNATE REALITY and now sought out the ATARI ORACLE for a solution.... Caught in a world where all was ruled by an ATARI SERIES OF STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS as though an EPIDEMIC had begun, they wondered if they would ever be able to ESCAPE FROM RIGEL, and the rest of this ASYLUM? Never to see BISHOP'S SQUARE or MAXWELL MANOR again? Would they ever get BEYOND CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN? Ever see THE LEATHER GODDESS OF PHOBOS? Would they ever want to? Stay tuned for the further episodes of the NEVER ENDING STORY of COMPUTER WARS where Atari has..... Power Without The Price!

THE ATARI CLUB OF DENVER MAY 1987 MEETING MINUTES

by Tommy E Thomas II

The crowd was restless and excited. People from all walks of life had gathered together for the granting of the same fantasy. The stadium quieted suddenly as an unseen announcer screamed, "Ladies and gentlemen of Aurora, Colorado! Please join the rest of the hard rockers and punkers, in welcoming that high tech computerized band of hard driving heavy metal! Hide your daughter's and run for your eardrums!! "It's... ATASCII AND THE MODEM MONKIES!!!" The crowd roared, waved their hands and pounded their feet on the floor, seats, or each other, as the flashpots exploded on stage and laser beams cut through the smoke filled air. A lone guitar ripped the night with a high pitched scream as the lead singer, Chester "The "PUN"ker" COX, appeared out of the fog on stage and wailed out a string of welcoming notes to the now delirious audience. After the opening song had screamed to a screeching halt, a cry from the crowd came for more news about the now ancient released EXPO album. A deep and powerful "NONE" came from Tommy "The Ogre" Thomas as he smashed, cut, and pounded through a stack of massive speakers with a chainsaw. Phil "The High Tech Pusher" Michealson, wearing his leather jacket and a "I SURVIVED THE ATARI EXPO!" T-shirt, announced that the songs of Blazing Paddles, Blazing Paddles Fonts and Shapes, Baker Street Case Disk #2, Guderia from Avalon Hill, and Debugg, were available on the new album called "Horizon Computers". Upon hearing this, a young girl from the front row took off her clothes,

threw them on stage, and began to dance and shake her software at the band. The next song was a slow one called "Hoes, woes, what to do?" It told of the band's problems about covering the costs of repairs, maintenance, and bad disks traded to the band for their fantastic albums. The audience voted that instead of trading disk for disk the band should charge a \$1 per disk. Audience members need not bring in anymore disks to trade with Paul "The Disk Master" Mirci, and his pet, rock and roll snake, Fuji.

A special guest then took the now sawdust covered stage and the crowd began banging their heads on the stage. From the band of "Dos and the Disassemblers", Dave "The Synthesizer" Coyer, sang a tune of powerful price reductions of the Hybrid Arts 8-bit MIDI system. (HALF PRICE!) He sang of the roots of the MIDI. Beginning with the Advanced Music System (AMS) and then on to the MIDI system itself. Flickers of flame from lighters, held high, lit up the night and moved with the song. Dave's informative song reached into the the hearts of all rock and rollers, while the MIDI showed the sheer power of Atari to all. As the final curtain was coming down, the band unleashed it's full RAM memory and screamed to everyone that the band would return next month for a return engagement of yet another world famous Atari Club of Denver SHAP MEET concert and that everyone was invited. At the same time a lightning bolt struck a power line two miles away. As the band reached the climax of the evening, a massive power surge electrified the concert hall. The band members danced on stage as the electricity reached out in all directions with high powered arcs and lit the stage as no special effects man could ever hope to imagine. Instruments, chips, graphics, a chainsaw, and mega-interfaces, burned brightly for a few endless seconds before reaching their maximum capacity and in a final protest to tariffs, welded themselves into a large circuit board. The lasers overloaded and flashpots exploded into a massive fire ball. Unaware of anything wrong, the crowd went absolutely crazy. None of the band members were to be seen on the stage and the people chanted in unison for a encore. The chant filled the night and unknown to anyone, the now mass of burning circuitry amplified the chant in it's final moments of memory. The chant intermingled into the pure essence of the night and entered the souls of everyone with even the smallest amounts of imagination. From here the chant gave them the inspiration to make their dreams come true. What was this chant, you may ask?

POWER WITH OUT THE PRICE! POWER WITHOUT THE PRICE!!

STARFLEET May 1987 Minutes by I. M. Kuhl, Guest Columnist

(It all started when I got this call from Leroy Boy. "Hey man," he said. "Thought you might want to know that Jerry Griffin's doin' a free gig tonight."

"oh wow! You mean a benefit? Like Bangladesh or something?" I was excited.

"No way man. Bigger." Leroy Boy paused. "He's giving a demo at Starfleet."

"Oh wow, Starfleet?" I asked. "Like Spock and Kirk and the Venus drug?"

"Naw," said Leroy Boy. "Starfleet the computer guys. You know, Atari."

"Oh wow, I remember. They was at that gig at the Holiday Inn. Right next to those High Bird Arts dudes."

"Yeah, them guys. Jerry'll be struttin' his stuff at seven sharp. I'll be there; I'm helpin' him set up." Leroy Boy sounded smug.

"Oh wow man, I don't wanna miss it. Tell me where it's at.")

Well Leroy Boy and Jerry must have got there real early 'cause they had tons of equipment set up when I got there at seven. The president of Starfleet, some dude named Scott, said Jerry was gonna open the show since he and Leroy Boy had to leave early. That was fine with me.

Well Jerry started by playing the "Star Spangled Banner." It was far out. Best version I've heard since Jimi at Woodstock. I don't know how Jerry does it but oh wow he's up there explaining it now.

The secret says Jerry, is the Midi-Mate. The Midi-mate is hooked between Jerry's instruments and his computer. The Midi-mate works with the computer to let Jerry edit and sample and store little bits of music from here and there and everywhere and put them back together in just the right order and play them out through the speakers or the instruments and stop and go and add or subtract and mix and match or change and.....Phew

Well Jerry played some more stuff but I can't remember what it was. My mind was still blown.

Next thing I remember Jerry is talking about his equipment. He's got two big keyboards and a drum machine and a sampler and a sequencer and two speaker towers and some amplifiers. He's also got an Atari 130 XE computer and a couple of those disk drives and something he calls software. He says those High Bird Arts dudes wrote the software but all I saw was little black squares.

Well before you know it Jerry's done answering questions and he and Leroy Boy are packing up to go. I figured the show's over and I'll leave too but now my legs are turned to Jello. So I stays put and listens to what the president dude is saying.

Now this poor dude, my heart goes out to him. He's saying that he needs volunteers to run for office in the club. He says that the big guy, Rich somebody, is moving to Arizona and he needs a new vice president. I look around to see how many hands are raised and it's like everyone is looking away. I tried to raise my hand but my arms had turned to Jello.

So the prez is saying that he needs a treasurer too. That's a cool job I think, somebody will want to be that. I looked around and nobody's hand is up. Oh wow, I got it; I know what it is. All these dudes had turned to Jello.

Well the prez gave up. He's introducing some dude named Tom Oughton. Tom, says the prez, is gonna demo Turbo Basic. Far out! I'm ready for Turbo anything.

Well Tom's up doing some stuff with music and pictures and stuff. Seems pretty neat to me. He's got a comparison that shows how much faster Turbo is than Atari basic. Oh wow, is that the "Star Spangled Banner" again? Here I go....

Somebody must have led me outside after the meeting. Somehow I got home and here I am now writing this column. Easy too; got one of them Atari computers and one of them little black squares called Atari-Writer.

STARFLEET June 1987 Minutes by Scott Andersen

The June meeting of Starfleet was held on June 12 at 7:00 pm at Pomona High School in Arvada. The meeting opened (as it usually does) with an informal question and answer session featuring Dave Lloyd. The President called the meeting to order at about 7:10 pm. A full agenda was announced and club business was the leading topic. It was resolved (motioned, seconded and voted upon) that the club would buy its own system (130XE and 1050) for use in demos and in preparing library disks. The system would stay in the possession of the Disk Librarian, except at meetings. A close look at a Happy Upgrade was postponed until a later meeting. It was further

resolved: That Guy McDaniel would accede to the office of First Vice President, replacing the to be missed Rich Covert. Replacing Guy as Second Vice President will be newcomer Donald Maus. The Treasurer's post will be filled by Orrin Bowling, replacing Rick Trotter who was finding it impossible to attend meetings. So the search for officers is over assuming Gary is back at his post next month. Club business was followed by some demos interspersed with some announcements by club members: Tory Heforgotyourlastname, (Sebring?) a new addition to Starfleet, demonstrated some of his personal creations. One was a write protect device, one was an Antic index system program that he has marketed. He was seeking comments and beta testing on both products, several members were glad to oblige him. Mike McCutcheon made a request for persons interested in trying library programs and making descriptions of same for the ultimate library disk. I hope this idea gets off the ground, but it will require some input from our members. Guy McDaniel was next on the agenda with a demo he had written to time Radio Controlled race cars. Ably assisted by yours truly at the wheel(joysticks) of a Radio Controlled off road vehicle, he showed us that the Atari was capable of keeping track of two racers, figuring reaction time and elapsed time, and calculating scale speeds for the cars. Some interesting infrared detectors and a starter that interfaced through the Atari's joystick ports were also displayed. Dave Lloyd then announced the 'contest'. More details to follow, I hope. The closing demo was performed by Tom Oughton. Tom brought along his printer and a "disk of the month" that he had compiled. It contained several printer utilities and a number of print fonts, including one (London) designed by Tom. Among the demos were 'Daisy-Dot', a NLQ aid for 'coarse' printers; a printer spooler program; a condensed script labeler; and two Printshop accessories. Thanks Tom. Once again the meeting had overrun curfew; the June gathering broke up at 10:10 pm.

TIDBIT

Compiled By Dave Lloyd ED.

8-BIT EMULATOR FOR THE ST, WILL DEFINATELY BE RELEASED!-- WITH ATARI'S APPROVAL!! If you read the article last month on DAREK MIHOCA'S plight to release his "ST TRANSFORMER", be sure and check for additional details in this month's issue. ATARI FINALLY MAKES ANOTHER 'RIGHT' DECISION.

(From John 'I've got the NEWS' Nagy and the Michigan Atari Magazine) (With our continuing THANKS!)

In continuing the vane of "AS THE EXPO TURNS"..... The Buffalo AtariFest at the end of April seemed down in attendance and involvement of vendors. Twenty Nine "vendor" areas including about seven users groups, with notables as HYBRID ARTS not attending. Atari didn't bring a Mega-ST to the show, but they DID bring the LASER PRINTER prototype. (That's more than WE GOT. ed.) Organizers are upset with ATARI over ADS and money. It seems that ATARI (finally) placed a major set of ads ONE WEEK before the show in the BUFFALO area, but included the WRONG DATE and WRONG USERS GROUPS NAMES.. They corrected that in a FRIDAY (day before the show) ad that also included a line from some other ATARIFEST: "Children 12 and under FREE ADMIT". The sponsors (Western New York Atari User Group and others) figure their losses at \$500.00 as a result. It is also reported that ATARI promised \$4000.00 in support money that has still (as of this reprint) not shown up. ATARI may be trying to get 'out from under' their

commitment to more ATARIFEST'S, as their enthusiasm wanes. Other promises made at the BUFFALO FEST: "ALL" The NEW and ANNOUNCED Products of ATARI 'should'? be on the market by the end of June. Anybody taking odds on this?? Also Neil Harris was quoted as stating that the 'soon to be released' Atari modem will have separate "COMMUNICATOR" kits providing software and SIO cables for different uses, 8-bit, ST, PC, etc. HMMM... ATARI's "Promise without Performance" of money for support is what made the large Detroit MACE club cancel their ATARIFEST. Word now is that the MAGIC club in DETROIT has progressed with their plans and that there WILL be a THREE DAY Detroit Fest in August.

SubLogic has announced a new revision to the ST Flight Simulator II program. In addition to correcting some bugs, Joystick usage is now supported! Best of all, send your original disk back and you will receive the new program FREE!! Lets hope others will follow this Great policy! Hats off to SUBLOGIC. Two new Data disk have been released in ST format. #7 and #11. From Computer+Software News 6/8 ATARI shifts from Mass Market to VARS, PC Stores Atari intends to radically revamp it's distribution focus, (What distribution focus? ED.) away from the Mass Market and Bid for presence in the Specialty Computer store channels. "Our effort will be to concentrate on getting quality VAR'S, (Value added Retailer's) and dealers says Sig Hartman, director of corporate sales." We are not doing anything with the Mass Market, we have tried those outlets and it didn't do anything for us. (AMEN, ED.) PC'S are too complicated now and need support. In September, Atari plans to begin spending 10% of it's revenues on PC product advertising. By fall Atari HOPES! to have a UNIX-like operating system that will run on it's machines. Sure... The Blitter will be shipping tomorrow too.... And on... and on....

ST INFORMER.

Premiring in May, This ST only Newspaper follows the format of ST World, providing news and views in a much more up-to-date format, then the magazines can, due to their short lead time. At \$2.00 per issue, these are extremely good values in Atari related information. Contact :

ST. INFORMER

909 NW STARLITE PLACE
GRANTS PASS, OR. 97526
(503)-476-007

COMPUTER SHOPPER

Many of you are already aware of the Information and programs available monthly in Computer Shopper. Jeff Brenner has written a very interesting column devoted to 8-bit systems, and their coverage of ST is growing every month. Some interesting debates on the ST vs Amiga have been published recently. As a bonus this Newspaper like magazine has the BEST in discount hardware ads and information. Pick one up you'll like it.

COMPUTER SHOPPER

407 S WASHINGTON AVE
PO BOX F
TITUSVILLE, FL 32781
(305)-269-3211

SSI NEWSLETTER

SSI, Makers of those Great War Simulation programs, has announced additional support in the way of a quarterly issued Newsletter, called INSIDE SSI. Here the enterprising War Gamer will find Questions and Answers for all of their popular games; articles about work in progress on new games and enhancements; designers tidbits and additional scenarios for games. (Issue One contained a scenario for Battle Cruiser) and customer support information and phone numbers. This issue is complimentary and contains a coupon for

a complimentary 1987 subscription. If you would like to get one write;

SSI

1046 N RENGSTORFF AVE

MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94043

THE CONTEST!!!

(or)

(I'll get you to write something)
(for the newsletter Yet!)

The Nice folks at B+C Computers, donated a 1030 Atari Modem and an Atari Pro Joystick to our clubs for running an ad in our May issue. (Some nice prices in that ad, I might add.). Anyways, Now.. How to distribute our new found treasures? A combined Raffle would be an accountants nightmare. And not all members of our clubs are able to attend the meetings. The Contest! For the next three month's we will be having a NEWSLETTER ARTICLE CONTEST. This is open to current members of all Atari Clubs. Submissions will be accepted on any Computer related subject. Using any Wordprocessor, Hardcopy, or Uploaded to the Skyline BBS System (303)-457-0320. Judging will be done by the Newsletter Editors and decision of the Judges is Final. Judging will be done on quality not quantity, and all formats, Type's, etc will be ignored. Author's providing multiple part or monthly articles will be given additional consideration. Submissions can be given to any of the club officers or sent to the clubs post office box.

Mile High Atari

PO Box 24064

Denver Co 80224

Starting date is June 1st. With all submissions due by Sept 15th. We will be printing articles as they are received, so the sooner you get started, the better your chances are. All articles must be of original material, no reprints please. Just think, 'YOU' Possibly Semi-Famous, published in a Real monthly Magazine received by hundreds around the country. And a 1030 or Pro Joystick to boot. Such a deal.....

Till Next Time.....

Dave

FLASH:ST-TRANSFORMER APPROVED FOR DISTRIBUTION
BY JOHN NAGY

(reprinted from Michigan Atari Magazine)
(6/87 with our Thanks)

Derek Mihocka's Atari 800-in an ST Program WILL BE RELEASED with ATARI'S approval! Neil Harris, spokesman for ATARI, has agreed (in a public message on Genie's ATARI Sig) to allow both USE and DISTRIBUTION of the Atari code within Derek's emulator. The permission is contingent on Derek's Publishing the SOURCE CODE for his emulator, so that other programmers may be able to add their efforts. Neil says the object of the move is to increase the likelihood of a truly versatile, full speed emulator. As it stands now, The St-Transformer uses largely custom routines modeled after the ATARI ROM, with some code grafted into the program at the startup by a port of the TRANSLATOR DISK (or in another version, they are already within the emulator program). That's what ATARI had said Derek could not legally do. At the Buffalo Atarifest in late April, two user groups showed Derek's "ST TRANSFORMER" in operation. The author sent both the Genesee Atari Group (G.A.G., Flint Michigan) and the Westmoreland Atari Computer Organization (W.A.C.O., North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania) copies of the public domain emulator for demonstration purposes only. Interest at both tables was brisk despite the uncompleted state



of the program and the current slowness of execution (20%-40% "normal" speed depending on the program). ATARI tried to ignore the demo's. WACO members quizzed ATARI reps over the actual status of the TRANSLATOR, which was sent to all registered users groups for FREE distribution. Sandy first said that it WAS NOT SENT and remained ATARI'S property, then admitted that she didn't know for sure. At issue was what restrictions (if any) can now be put on the uses of the disks after years of FREE distribution. An intriguing facet of the conflict appeared when a program called XLFIX, available for sale in ANTIC MAGAZINES public domain library, was found to work as well or better than the original ATARI disk. There are several other translators and operating systems available (both in the public domain and commercially-BOSSXL, NEWELL, OSN, ETC.). It appears that ATARI would first have to legally assert ownership and control of ALL the "translators" in order to get any legal claim against Darek for using one or more of them in his 800 emulator. The dark prospects of long and possibly unsuccessful legal action, together with petition drives, newsletter editorials and comments running in most major telecommunications services and magazines-all in support of the "ST-TRANSLATOR"- now seems to have gotten through to ATARI. In May, Neil Harris went on record saying that if Darek would only put his program source code into the public domain for further development by other programmers, then ATARI would give their permission for use and distribution of their operating system. Darek Mihocka was unwilling to release his source code as public domain, for he would then have given up any rights to his efforts. Fortunately, Atari softened their position, changing their demand to simply the PUBLISHING of the code, with the rights to his work remaining with the author. Darek had previously contacted several other major ATARI-interest magazines about the possibility of their publishing the TRANSFORMER and the source code in copyrightable form, but was turned down by each. The main reason was ATARI'S vocal objection to the project and it's legal questions. However, Neil stated in his May 15th messages that ANY magazine would be satisfactory, and that a formal proposal letter of permission would be sent within days. Richard Frick of ATARI called to confirm this on MAY 20th. Darek will have the consent needed for any interested magazine to publish and distribute the ATARI ROM with the emulator, as well as any parts of DOS and BASIC that may help. Availability time, publishing timetable, and even which magazine will offer the program can only be guessed at. It is clear that wherever it is printed, ATARI wants no restrictions on distribution (ie., ANTIC and it's no BBS rule). Frick indicated that ATARI could 'influence' ANTIC on this issue for this particular program is necessary. All the flap hasn't slowed Darek's progress on the continuously developing project. He added SOUND, GTIA graphics, DOS menus, JOYSTICK control, and YES! Player-Missile graphics to the already fairly capable emulator. The Player-Missile routines were completed and donated by another sympathetic programmer. Speed improvements continue to be made. Throughout the month's of discussion on the subject, Neil Harris and company at ATARI kept asking "Why would anyone want to use 8-Bit software on the ST?.. Perhaps a much better question would be "WHY NOT?". WACO and other user groups WANT an emulator to provide SOME kind of link, however flawed, between the two product lines of ATARI CORP. Distribution of a successful emulator disk by ST Dealers might be all some 8-bit owners need to convince them that it is time for a system upgrade-or at least assure them that an upgrade in hardware won't mean an instant loss of 100% of the software they have grown with for years. (They made the right decision.. Incredible!! DL,ed)

DISK COMPRESSION PROGRAMS

By Howard Ferguson

(From Portland Atari users)

(With our Thanks!!)

If you use a modem for file transfers, you are probably aware of the most time consuming part of modeming: File Transfers. File transfers can be a very rewarding part of calling BBS's and large telecommunications networks such as Compuserve and GENIE, but they also eat up a lot of time. This can cost you log-on time and money if you are a frequent file downloader or uploader.

Inspired by this problem, there have been a lot of programs written with the idea of compacting files to make file transfers faster and easier. Two major types of compression programs have materialized to help us modem users out. The first type will compact an entire disk, including the DOS files and in some cases, the disk format. The second type will compress selected files on a disk, which can be 'decoded' on to any format.

DISK COMMUNICATOR and SCRUNCH are good examples of programs that will take an entire disk and compress it into one file. These programs will compact not only the files that you want to transfer, but also the DOS and the directory. This type of file is excellent for converting boot disks into a transferable file. The ATARI Translator disks are good examples of the type of disk where this type of transfer is necessary. When you have downloaded the compacted file, you can then uncompress them and you will have an exact copy of the disk. All you have to do is boot and go.

ARC (Archiver) is an example of the type of program that will compress a group of selected files into a single file. This is good for a group of related files that must be placed on a disk with certain file names to run the desired program. Many game and utility programs require several support files and they should be named properly to run. The ARC program will uncompress these files on to a disk and give them their original names so that you don't have to worry about that problem. The other advantage of the ARC program is that you can uncompress these files on a disk with your favorite DOS and density. You also save space in the compressed file because it does not contain unnecessary information such as DOS and directory sectors. The disadvantage of ARC is that it will not compress Boot disks, so it will not work for disks such as the ATARI Translator.

With the help of test data received from GENIE and some data compiled on my own, I have set up a chart of effectiveness of each of the major compaction/uncompaction programs currently available. The chart below shows the results of the tests. The test consisted of compacting a group of files into a single file and then uncompressing it back to it's original state. With all of the programs except DISK COMMUNICATOR, the files were compacted from a floppy to a ramdisk and then transferred back to the floppy. Disk Communicator would not work from the ramdisk. The DOS used was Sparta Dos 3.2d for all tests because it's the fastest DOS available and provided easy ramdisk capability's. The files compacted were one each: Basic Save program, Text, Object code, A Koala Picture, and an AMS II music file. Total byte count of the source files was 58704 bytes or 472 sectors.

PROGRAM	BYTE CHANGE	SECTOR CHANGE	MAKE TIME	RECOV TIME
SCRUNCH2	+1.8%	+0.6%	3.6	5.8
SHRINK2	+1.8%	+0.8%	4.1	3.3
SUPER BOOT	+6.0%	4.7%	2.4	2.5
SCOPY	+3.3%	2.1%	1.5	1.1
ARC	-24.7%	-25.4%	13.0	9.8
DISKCOM	+5.7%	+3.6%	4.0	2.8

The results of this test are subjective in that the results differ from file to file and from disk to disk, but the programs selected were designed to provide a cross section of the major file types that are found on most BBS systems. The results do show however that as far as decreasing the size of the result file, ARC was the best by far. In fact the other programs actually increase the size of the result file. As far as speed in compacting and uncompactng SCOPY was the fastest. It's only marginally slower than a standard DOS copy. SCRUNCH2 seemed to provide the best results for boot disk recovery because of it's flexibility in recreating the original DOS format.

Hopefully, this test will help you to decide (What decision? ed.) which program to use when uploading a file for others, and a little insight into the reasoning behind the format used by BBS SYsops when the put files up on the system.

STIG MEETING JUNE 16, 1987 LOUIS MENDOZA

For those interested in acquiring one of the club Pd disks offered by the club, please bring a formatted disk to the meeting and our librarian Louis will make you a copy. He will also have the list of the programs available. Right now we do not have a large selection, but it is growing every month and with your help we hope to have one of the best ST Pd libraries around.

Well this months meeting was one of guess work, the disk drive in Ed's 1040 had us all wondering if it would last out the evening. I think the poor thing was confused as to which switch was doing what and it suffered a nervous breakdown but after all we are a interest group, so we got onto other more stimulating topics. The Running Board was suppose to be up by this time but it seems the replacement Hard Drive has not come in yet and the bad luck is still hanging around because in addition to the HD going down the tubes, a rom chip and power pack were also fried, but be patient, there is nothing on this earth that can keep a determined Atari fanatic from completing his goals even at the expense of his sanity and family.

Phil from Horizon Computers was once again one of our main speaker in that he gave short summaries of the following programs now available at the store and he reminded everyone that the club members still have a discount that may be used when purchasing products. The prices shown on this report are suggested retail and are not the actual, please get a hold of someone at Horizon if you are interested in any of these products.

***** For those like myself that still have there 8bit Atari's, there is now a Mouse that really work and it sells for \$50.00, it is my understanding that it does not require any special software to run it and connects into your joy stick port.

***** CAD 2.0 is now and retails for 89.95

***** Easy draw now works with the Atari Lazer Printer

***** Master Plan is 100% Lotus compatible and retails for \$130.00

***** SUB BATTLE is a new program, (Phil says its better than Silent Service), retails for \$39.95

***** A new program call 'STUFF' is now available and is aimed toward the programmer in you, this has so much stuff that you'll have to call Phil to get a full description.

***** Monitor Master allows you to have both a color and mono monitor to be hooked up to the same computer, this will also allow you to connect your computer to your stereo. If you are planning to visit Horizon Computers, do it before July 5 or after July 10 other wise you'll find the doors locked, for some reason, Phil believes he needs a vacation.

REVIEWS: CHESSMASTER 2000 BY ED FASON

This is a chess program that allows the users to play a human opponent or the computer. It uses the JEM menu and has 4 different levels of play. The EASY MODE cuts down on the amount of randomizing the computer does. NEWCOMER STYLE, in this mode the computer teaches you to plan your moves. NORMAL, the computer thinks during your turn. OPEN BOOK, there are 7000 + moves that the computer can look up. It can be played in 2D or 3D, it has clocks for both players, you can rotate the board, change color of board or pieces and print moves to name just a few of the options. As if all this is not enough, the computer also has a sense of humor and provides satire from time to time. Setup allow you to set up your own problems and let the computer analyze it. You can have the computer respond in voice, music, bell or in silence. It comes with excellent DOC'S but some times when you are in 3D mode it is difficult to see or move the pieces in front of some of the taller pieces, this is normally solved by rotating the board, which can be done in 1/4 turns or setting it to 2D. There are always some things that do not get put into this news letter, it is either because I become so interested in what is transpiring that I do not take notes or that I am so tired when I type up the report that even my notes don't make sense to me. I guess if you really want to know what you missed, you'll just have to come on down to the next meeting and find out.

Bye

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ANTIC'S JUNE '87 CES REPORT

OPENING DAY OVERVIEW - MAY 30

BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC EDITOR

* Atari's 8-bit computer line is far from dead -- with a new double-speed, double-density 5 1/4 inch disk drive due this summer, as well as the long-awaited 1200 baud plug-in modem and the 80-column box...plus the XE Game System that comes with 64K, a keyboard, a light gun and Flight Simulator II. * The ST has yet another new wave of remarkable and mind-boggling products on the way. Within our first hour at CES we saw a 4-megabyte memory board that goes into any ST without soldering, and the Hybrid Arts ADAP Soundrack CD-quality stereo sampling and editing system that competes with the vastly more expensive Synclavier and Fairlight in high-end MIDI.

And these are just quick first impressions from the opening hours of a Consumer Electronics Show that supposedly was not going to produce any major new Atari announcements... The first day of CES is still underway as I write this on Antic's trusty Radio Shack 100 in hopes of catching a special Saturday merge that ANTIC ONLINE has arranged with CompuServe. So let's get right to the opening round of news:

8-BIT UPDATE

We'll start with the good news for 8-bit users. The XF551 disk drive is the big surprise. It's a compact 5 1/4 inch drive in XE gray, about 3/4 the size of the now-discontinued 1050 drive and priced in about the same \$160 range as the 1050. The XF551 is also claimed to be 2.9 times faster than a 1050 and boasts true double density -- as well as automatic compatibility with every other density format ever used for the 8-bit Atari. It seemed clear from talking to a number of Atari sources that a 3 1/2 inch disk drive for the 8-bit computers is now unlikely to be produced. The XF551 drive will have a new ADOS operating system which is nearing completion by OSS, the creators of DOS 2 and DOS 2.5.

Promised features of ADOS include a tree structure allowing directories and easy toggle between menu or command operations.

According to Atari's Jose Lopes, the key engineer/ designer of the new XE products described in this dispatch, the first XF551 drives can be expected to start trickling into the stores by July. The same July arrival date now holds true for the 80-column XEP80 display box (reviewed in the July '87 Antic) and the new 1200 baud SX212 modem. Valdes says both products have been delayed by a wait for delivery of main chips, but all other components and packaging are stockpiled in readiness for assembly at Atari's Taiwan factory. AtariWriter Plus 80 was operating on the XEP80 in a razor-sharp 80-column display at the Atari Booth. The SX212 modem will be bundled with a new version of Keith Ledbetter's famed Express software which the author is scheduled to demonstrate later in the show.

XE GAME SYSTEM

The first working pre-production prototypes of the XE Game System were on view atop the roof of Atari's large booth structure, along with a real Cessna airplane that Atari somehow got into the new CES North Hall. The Game System is essentially a two-piece 65XE computer that costs as much as a 130XE. But instead of 128K memory, you get a light-gun, a joystick and three games — Flight Simulator II on cartridge, Missile Command in ROM and a pistol game called Bug Hunt. At least 18 arcade and disk best-sellers are now promised for Atari cartridge by Christmas, including 1 On 1, Gato, Midnight Magic, Karateka, Choplifter and Blue Max. Most titles are to sell for \$19.95 each. Atari Software Director John Skruch says the XE can get as much as 256K on a bank-switching cartridge. Flight Simulator II only required 128K. Two hard-hitting TV commercials for the Game System were on Display. The system is designed to be sold in separate pieces overseas. Eventually the light-gun will be available in the USA as an 8-bit peripheral. An ST mouse will work on the XE Game System in trackball mode —

CONTROL-T.

ANOTHER ST BONANZA

This CES had another dazzling array of ST computer products on display. We'll be looking at a lot more of them in our later reports. During just our first hours around the crowded Atari area, here's what we found that seemed especially impressive: Micro D of Canada was showing a prototype 2/4Mb memory upgrade board that is supposed to install inside any ST without soldering. The Data-Free Board will sell for \$159 without RAM chips. The 4-megabyte upgrade requires 32 chips and the 2Mb takes 16. The chips cost \$30 each from Micro D or you can shop for a better price on your own. Hybrid Arts, the king of Atari MIDI developers, was showing their \$1995 ADAP Soundtrack digital sampling system, which will be on sale in July. ADAP offers the sound quality of compact disks — in true stereo if you get a dual hardware setup. On a stage in the Atari area, ADAP was in action — effortlessly pulling selected portions off any tape and manipulating the sound in real-time with a simple visual interface. Sounds could be played back in reverse, cut and pasted, stretched, faded and otherwise manipulated, as fast as you could click a mouse. Frank Foster of Hybrid Arts told Antic that Tom Hudson is looking into the ADAP math co-processor box for speeding up certain math-intensive operations of his graphics software (DEGAS, CAD-3D) such as ray tracing. Springboard was showing their little-publicized ST conversion of Certificate Maker at the Atari booth. Shelbourne Software's 3D Breakthrough, the first ST game using the Stereotek 3D Glasses, was a spectacular sight. You move through an elaborate maze by shooting your way through flashy barriers.

The disk will also include a non- 3D version that doesn't require glasses.

Sorry, gotta cut off now to try for same-day upload. Lots more Atari news from CES will be in our follow-up reports on ANTIC ONLINE.

Chicago — CES NEWS From Saturday, May 30, 1987:

From the Atari Booth, topped with a real Cessna Airplane, the word was "flying high with Atari". The theme followed through into the exhibit space where Flight Simulator II played from a cartridge on a large screen monitor inside the cockpit of a Cessna. Atari chose to push its game side, and the new computer lines were not being shown. There was a PC Clone getting minimal attention but the absence of MEGA ST's, Laser printers, 1200 baud modems, Blitter enhanced ST's, IBM emulator, and 80 Column Cards, left little doubt that this was to be a game show. Recently appointed Vice President and General Manager of US operations, J. J. (Jerry) Brown confirmed this in his press release of today stating "Atari intends to remain the leader in video game systems and to increase its share of the US personal computer market."

While this author's first impressions (as an Atari Business computer user) were quite negative, given that the preceding release, titled "ATARI ANNOUNCES AGGRESSIVE NEW MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT VIDEO GAMES AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS" was simultaneously issued with releases titled "ATARI ANNOUNCES 40 NEW GAMES AND LICENSING AGREEMENTS WITH COMPUTER GAME AND ARCADE COMPANIES" and "ATARI TO BEGIN SHIPMENT OF NEW XE GAME SYSTEM BUNDLED WITH THREE POPULAR GAMES" and given that no "business" computer releases were made, a closer reading of the releases lead to some rather surprising hypotheses of the situation. The first page and 3/4's of the 3 page advertising campaign announcement is devoted to game machine promotions planned for the balance of this year, including national TV spots starting in September, comic book ads, in store hardware and software demos, and full repackaging of the game machines and XE's. Not until the back pages did we note that 4 TV ads (starting late 3rd quarter and running through New Years) and a substantial portion of the new advertising budget (quadrupled from previous levels) would be devoted to the ST's! (This as opposed to 3 new ads starting in September for the games). The budget also calls for some major print ads to follow and support the TV effort. Now the pessimist will assume that Atari is bent on forgetting the computers in favor of games. The more business oriented will notice that Atari Stock and Sales of ST's have been doing rather well, and that in the introduction of the ST's and MEGA the games assets of the company were nearly step-children. Further, the XE is almost in direct competition with the ST's and likely in an overstocked condition at Atari. The optimist will, therefore, assume that Atari is on a campaign to liquidate the old stock in new boxes, maintain its game market share, and produce the liquidity and corporate energies to actively continue its ST advantage. In assessing Atari's strategies, one must remember that the manpower of this company has sorely lagged it's growth in home computer market share, and that Atari had nothing to do with the conflicting schedules of CES and Comdex this year. With limited manpower and time to produce and to sell product, I am optimistic and feel that Atari made the right decisions in the face of the tough decision forced by The Interface Group's show timing. The balance of this quarter should tell! (c) 1987 CIS SYSOP*David G. Groves

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 ANTIC'S JUNE '87 ATARI CES REPORT #2
 8-BIT NEW PRODUCT ROUNDUP
 BY NAT FRIEDLAND, ANTIC

Springboard has now started work on an 8-bit Atari version of Newsroom.

Newsroom is a popular entry-level page layout program for easy newsletters. Springboard is already showing an ST version of their Certificate Maker here, this product is currently shipping. Good news for Atari graphics users who have been trying to find a touch tablet. Suncom's Animation Station for XL/XE is now available. The included software provides many pre-drawn pictures as well as automatic shape generation. The tablet can be used in place of joysticks or paddles to control any standard Atari software, according to Suncom. At Antic's suggestion, Suncom is now looking into converting their convenient keyboard-mounted joystick for use with the Atari 8-bit and ST. Strategic Simulations Inc. had extra reason for celebrating at their suite, high above the Chicago River. Last week they signed a contract with TSR to start the first computer versions of the original Dungeons and Dragons games. You should be able to play D&D on your Atari by Christmas. Datasoft, now being released through Electronic Arts, has two welcome 8-bit titles due out before July. Video Title Shop (\$29.95) lets you create colorful animated sequences with graphics and moving text -- which can be transferred to your videorecorder tape via standard electronics cables. Video Title Shop includes the Micro- Painter Plus paint program and a library of built-in borders and screen images. Scrolling, position-changes, fadeouts and a whole range of video special effects are supported. A second disk of video "clip art" for the program will also be released this year. Also from Datasoft at \$29.95 is the second installment of Alternate Reality -- The Dungeon -- which seems to play much faster and more conveniently, with less disk swapping than the earlier installment of this large-scale graphics adventure game.

Most of the unreleased software on display at CES was promised for shipment by early summer. One of the few new packages I was actually able to bring back for review is...Virtuoso. This is the long-evolving music/graphics storyboard system that Antic previewed almost two years ago. The XL/XE version is \$49.95 and the ST version is reportedly well along in development. Infocom had two of its top adventure programmers on hand at the show -- Dave Lebling (Lurking Horror) and Steve Meretzky (Stationfall, Hitchhiker's Guide). Brian Moriarty was left home in Boston to continue working on the new Beyond Zork project which will blend role-playing with the text adventure format. Activision, Infocom's parent company, had only two arcade cartridges for the Atari 2600, Kung Fu Master and Commando. The fourth (and final) ANTIC ONLINE report from the June '87 CES will feature tonight's second annual ChicagoLand Atari Users Group dinner meeting, which is attended by many top executives and programming professionals from the Atari world.

XM301 WARNING!! By Paul Alhart

(from Pokey Press with our Thanks)

If you own an Atari XM301 modem, you may own an electronic "time bomb". After a rash of hardware failures last month, which included smoking a disk drive and two printer interfaces, I found the cause of my problem to be my XM301. The modem worked fine, but

was killing off my system piece by piece. The reason has to do with the thirteen wires coming from the serial I/O plug, although only nine wires are actually used by the modem. The other four wires have about 1/8th inch of bare wire showing, and are just hanging around, unterminated, waiting to touch something they shouldn't. I checked other XM301 modems and this conditions existed in them too.

Here is what to do IMMEDIATELY!! With all the power OFF, remove the two screws from the back of the modem and lift off the plastic case. You will find that 4 of the wires are not connected to anything. They will be cut off close to the other sheathing of the cable. If these four wires show any bare metal, cut it off. Be careful not to let the cut off pieces fall into the mother board. Next, tape each wire individually, so that it cannot possibly touch any other wires or parts in the modem. Put the modem back in it's case, replace the screws and your done. Simple enough!!

IN YOUR DRIVE # --what is this, six?

Why aren't you keeping better track of these things? (Don't look at ME!) OI' Chester has completely forgotten which installment this is, and (having just returned from out of town) has no idea where past issues of the newsletter are. First person to identify which installment of IYD this is -- lessee, they'll win a free blank 5.25 inch disk, with funny little holes punched in the side. Maybe even a paper sleeve to put it in. Gosh!

The pickings are pretty slim this time out; I WARNED you I couldn't afford to get lots of new software each month just for review purposes. Fortunately, Horizon Computers let me test-drive a couple of products, and my family made me a Father's Day gift of one of the most infuriatingly-tough adventures I've played. And this time, we cover 8-bit AND 16-bit stuff.

Which brings an aside: I'd like to see some consistency in language. If we're to refer to the entire 8-bit line as 8-bits (which makes more sense than referring to them as 800/XL/XEs), then the 16-bits should be referred to as 16-bits, rather than STs. Or we could just call all 8-bits XEs, just like we refer to all IBM clones as PCs. What do you think?

Anyway, about those new items....

THE M-1 MOUSE (\$59.95 from M-1) may be the most important news to hit the 8-bit Atari line since the 800's introduction. Unlike the crummy Rat, this mouse is durable and useable. Its response beats any joystick I've found, and it responds as well as the mouse on the ST -- and far better than some mice I've used on IBM clones. It works with ANY program (which we tried, and we tried LOTS) which a joystick works with; it makes drawing programs very pleasant indeed.

If the opportunity of a GEM-type interface for the 8-bits become a reality (and there's a rumour that a local programmer is working on such a thing), this could spell a whole new life to the 8-bit Atari. The only thing which could be more exciting (and important) to our Ataris would be the actual for-real release of the 80-column board. But the 80-column board is fictional--we'll probably never see it. The M-1 Mouse is real and its here. We've been waiting a very long time for it.

THE SUNCOM ANIMATION STATION (\$89.95 from SunCom) - Now that Koala has disappeared and Atari no longer makes a Touch Tablet, a void had been felt. Drawing pads make tracing art much simpler, and there are some of us who absolutely have to have the feel of a pen or pencil to draw. Light pens aren't the answer (How long can you hold YOUR arm horizontal?), joystick drawing is a joke, and the M-1 Mouse hadn't arrived yet. Voila! The SunCom Animation Station is a 100% KoalaPad compatible drawing pad with several improvements.

The improvements seem minor until you get your hands on it and feel it. It's larger. This means it takes up more room, but it also means you HAVE more room to draw with. It's gridded; you can pattern your "x and y coordinates" (each area on your monitor screen) with simplicity. And the stylus slides into an easy compartment; this pad is easy to store.

It also comes with a disk of Commodore utilities (the pad is originally made for Commodores). As I've stated in the past, getting to format a Commodore disk is always worth an extra \$10.

THE COMPUTER HAND (\$9.95) - This is an arm with a clip. The clip holds your copy, easy to refer to when typing. The whole arrangement is held by velcro to your monitor, and takes up no room on your desk.

This is one of those simple ideas which makes you slap your head, wondering why you never thought of it. It's easily as handy as an extra drive, and should be given to every secretary by their respective bosses. You'll find it just as handy on -- or should I say OFF? -- your desk.

THE ROM SCANNER is one of those nifty little devices which I wish they'd (whoever "they" always are) make for the 8-bits. This is a device for the Atari 2600 game machine. You can plug in a number of different cartridges, then select which one to actually run. I'd love to be able to have BASIC XE, Star Raiders, MicroSoft BASIC II, LOGO, AtariWriter, and Q-Bert all plugged in, and be able to just select one to run on my 800XL. For the 2600 owner who is tired of plugging and unplugging, this is running at different prices throughout town.

COMPOSITE CABLE FOR THE ATARI 520 ST (\$19.95, Giodata Computer Systems) has one of the most unweildy names for any product. It's also one of the most useful items for the Atari 16-bit computers.

Let's suppose you were a new ST buyer. The monochrome version is \$200 less than the color monitor package. The monochrome version also is easier to read -- and your prime needs are word processing and data management. If they aren't your prime needs, the 8-bit Ataris play games just as fast and telecommunicate with the same efficiency. I've found no other need for computers than these three things: Word processing, data processing (spreadsheets process data also, their data are called numbers), and gaming. Therefore, most people have bought monochrome versions, if Atari's figures are to be believed (and maybe they are, this time).

But, geeeeeeeeeee, there's some nice games in color for the 16-bits, which won't run in monochrome...and they look lousy on your color TV. This is where this composite cable comes in handy. On the 520 ST (Why doesn't it work on the 1040, I wonder? It doesn't use the color TV plug..), it allows you to hook up any composite monitor, and the output is delightful. Comparing the graphics, I'd say that a good composite monitor (such as the NEC JC-1215MA) looks 80-95% as good as the more expensive Atari 1224 color monitor. This is an effective, and cheap alternative.

PERRY MASON - THE CASE OF THE MANDARIN MURDER (\$49.95, Telarium) is one of those adventures that grip your mind and just won't let go. Uncredited (which is disturbing; the author of this truly deserves credit), it plays very much like one of the Perry Mason novels. It plays even more like one of the Perry Mason TV episodes, with the exception that you have to be as clever as Perry himself. Not easy, let me tell you.

The documentation is essential, and the design of the manual and package adds a great deal to the realism of the game. Volume 67, number 3 of the CRIMINAL DEFENSE PROCEDURES (paperclipped with a note from ever-faithful Della Street) gets you started and gives you hints. A Mandarin Restaurant menu gives you a list of all(?) words used in the game's interpreter (a more functional word than "parser," don't you think?) and tells you the best way to structure sentences for the program. And good old Paul Drake (he's not replaced by his son in your Perry Mason world) has included some background notes on the prosecution's witnesses, newspaper clippings, and personal notes on each. If you have time, a STUDY GUIDE FOR THE CALIFORNIA BAR EXAM (Time: 20 minutes, 20 questions) is included for your further education. DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT NOT READING THIS DOCUMENTATION BEFORE STARTING THE GAME!!!!

The game runs in either monochrome or color monitor versions. The drawings are detailed and beautiful in the color version, they are totally absent in the monochrome version. Personally, I discovered that I preferred no pictures (you can choose PICTURESOFF on color too); the pictures just didn't match up with the movement and anxiety which the written words described. Infocom (Zork, Planetfall, etc) seems to have the right idea with their no graphics policy. In either version, you can run a demonstration of the game first. I strongly recommend watchin the demo a couple of times to get an idea of your capabilities.

Your capabilities are considerable. In my first trial run, I examined the scene of the murder, got hassled by Sgt Holcomb, questioned my client at the jail (where she'd been drugged and was incoherent), and read through a pile of files before attending court trial. At court, I was able to object, send Paul out on errands, send Della out for phone calls, and examine and cross-examine witnesses. The hints the manuals give on tripping up witnesses proved invaluable. And the manner in which I asked the questions (and my facial expressions) made differences also.

This is a fine adventure for the Atari 16-bits. I firmly think Telarium is making a mistake by not translating this to the 8-bits, for it doesn't seem to require much memory at a time (every picture accesses the disk, and many descriptions do also). Try writing them at 1 Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA 02139 to tell them to get on the Atari ball. If you liked DEADLINE, you'll love this. If you enjoyed the Perry Mason TV shows (any version), you'll be instantly hooked. Ahhhh, they even included the theme -- I think I'll listen to it now.

End of another column, again running late. If you care to comment, or even lend some product(s) for review, contact me on either the MYCROFT BBS, SKYLINE BBS, or at 166 S Rosemary, Denver CO 80231. Be good, and remember to wiggle your fuji!

ATARI COMPUTER CLUB OF DENVER

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Comments:

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